

Soviet Journalist Privately Urges Jews Not to Pay New Exit Tax

By HEDRICK SMITH
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MOSCOW, Aug. 27—A Soviet journalist today called for Soviet Jews to refuse to pay the new tax on educated emigrants, charging that it would doom thousands of Jews to years of waiting as "unsold slaves" until ransom money could be raised abroad.

Viktor Perelman, who was dismissed from his job after he applied to emigrate to Israel earlier this year, estimated that the total costs of the new taxes could run as high as \$250-million and questioned whether such large sums could be raised soon.

In an unofficial article circulating in typescript copies and titled "Reflections Before the Auction," Mr. Perelman contended that Soviet authorities were trying to convert emigrating Jews into a "commodity on the international financial market" to earn badly needed hard currency.

Soviet authorities, he contended, were eager for some Jews to begin paying the taxes though so far as is known none has done so. Officials, he said, were trying to induce payments from Jews with approved visas and threatening to withdraw the visas if they delayed too long.

'Sale Might Flop'

"It seems that the authorities are hurrying to declare the auction open, fearing that the sale might flop if civilized society said, 'No.'"

Mr. Perelman rejected the official assertions that would-be emigrants should repay the state for their education as "no more than camouflage, devoid of any legal basis," on grounds that educational costs were re-

couped by society early in an individual's working career.

In support of this thesis, Mr. Perelman cited an article published by a leading Soviet demographer, Prof. B. T. Urlanis, asserting that "after the first five or six years of his working life, a person has completely paid off his debt to society" for the costs of his education.

"There then begins a period of credit balance between the value of the material wealth created by him and what has been invested in him," Professor Urlanis wrote, in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, the Writers Union weekly, on July 29, 1970.

Visa Application Rejected

Mr. Perelman worked on the staff of that newspaper until seven months ago after having applied for a visa to Israel. He was also expelled from the Communist party and was later told that his visa application was being rejected because he knew too much about the internal workings of the Soviet Establishment, he said.

Last Wednesday, he was arrested by three plainclothes men after meeting with a foreign correspondent but was later released.

Mr. Perelman contended that even without the new tax, the state was gaining financially from emigration because emigrants were forfeiting pension benefits that they had accrued.

His estimate that as much as \$250-million might be needed to pay education taxes was based, according to his article, on the assumption that there were now 80,000 applicants for visas to Israel and that 20 per cent to 25 per cent had higher education.

Mr. Perelman is said to have reckoned that on the average individuals would have to pay

11,000 rubles—about the median amount of the taxes—meaning that 20,000 educated applicants would face total levies of about 220 million rubles, or roughly \$250-million.

Western diplomats and other Jewish activists consider these figures vastly overstated. One knowledgeable activist reckoned the amount at more than \$25-million. But even such figures are hypothetical because

no official statistics even on the number of applicants, let alone their educational levels, have been made public.

Mr. Perelman contended that Soviet authorities had been fairly open about their intentions of making the new education tax a money-making proposition, though other analysts have thought its primary purpose was to stop a drain of educated people by checking

the emigration of intellectuals to Israel.

On Aug. 15, Mr. Perelman said, a group of Jews was told by Sergei Alyoshin, a Finance Ministry official: "We are not so naive as to suppose that you have as much as this. But you know where to get it and I imagine you'll be able to do so."